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VISUAL ARTS

Dennis Scholl explores collective memory and space in 'A Day of Four Sunsets'

By **Michelle F. Solomon** *Artburst Miami*

November 5, 2025 5:04 PM | Gift Article

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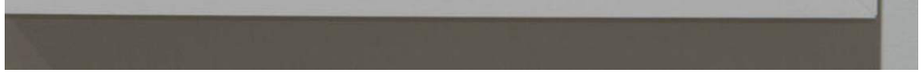
Dennis Scholl's art work from his first U.S. solo show in Miami, in March of 2025, tapped into a multitude of memories from different eras – some of what was included were three dodecagon newspaper triptychs of President John F. Kennedy's 1963 assassination, ephemera from the 1972 Munich Olympics with the original Olympic torch as its centerpiece, and a collection of Charles Dickens' paperbacks from 1895.

With his latest exhibition, "A Day of Four Sunsets," at the Hollywood Art and Culture Center, Scholl continues his ongoing inquiry into collective memory through assemblages, this time with an eye toward space exploration.



Untitled (Kapton Foil), 2024, acquired objects. A small sculptural work arranged with a dodecagonal framework incorporating Kapton foil used on many missions to protect the capsule from overheating. *(Photo by Marco Bellochio)*

“These are not everyday objects, but they’re actual, real material from NASA that he’s using to tell the story of the space race,” says Jodi Sypher, curator at Hollywood Art and Culture Center.

Over the past decade, the avid collector, whose passion started with a bottle cap collection when he was five years old, gathered NASA-related memorabilia—photographs, patches, declassified documents, vintage press clippings, and diagrams.

Untitled (Russian Rations), 2024, acquired objects. n assemblage on a plinth featuring Russian space food used on the International Space Station. *(Photo Marco Bellachio)*

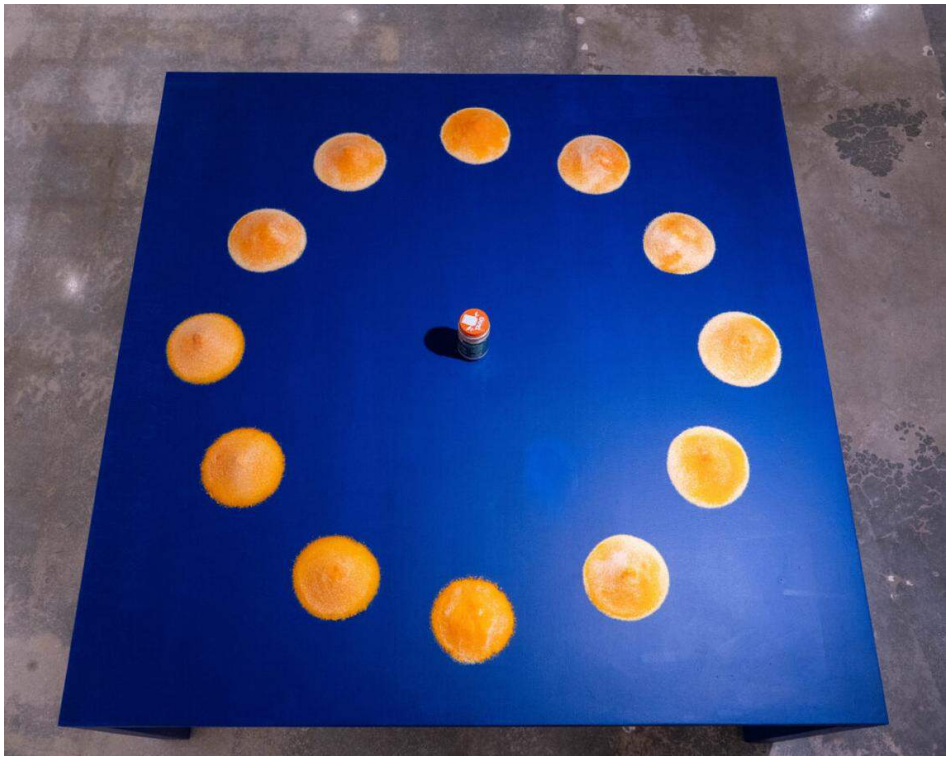
“When I started thinking about the show, I began to ask myself, ‘What memories are out there? What memories can I look to?’ Because that’s such a big part of my practice,” says the Miami Beach-based artist.

There should also be a throughline, he decided, one with subtle shades of optimism. The idea soon began to take shape.

“What’s the seminal moment of the space program? Of course, man landing on the moon. But there was also that moment when John Glenn blasted off to become the first person to orbit the Earth. He did three revolutions, starting at sunset. In four hours and 55 minutes, he saw the sun set four times. When he came back, that was all he could talk about. He didn’t care that he was the first guy to circle the Earth—he just kept saying, ‘You can’t believe what that’s like.’”

It became the inspiration for the name of the show. As curator, Sypher says she worked with Scholl on the themes: “Liftoff and ascent, orbit and observation, and re-entry and reflection. It is laid out to tell a story. Within each, there are those themes.”

With Scholl's background as a documentary filmmaker—he's made 87 films and won more than 20 regional Emmy Awards—Sypher says the exhibition unfolds much like a documentary. "Each artwork acts as a single frame, incorporating both light and sound." In her essay about the exhibition, she writes: "Like a skilled cinematographer, he draws the viewer in for a closer look, revealing the stories hidden within."



Untitled (Tang): An original 1960s bottle of Tang powdered orange drink, surrounded by twelve scoops of current day Tang orange powder. *(Photo by Marco Bellochio)*

Scholl again turns to the dodecagon, which Sypher notes not only frames the objects but "suggests the passage of time."

Using the geometric shape as a structural element, Scholl intentionally draws on the associations with time, order, and continuity.

"It's an orbital type of idea. Something that goes around and around. It's mostly about time, right? Hours on a clock, months in a year, the signs of the Zodiac," says the artist.

Sypher concludes it is a "powerful technique and method for conceptual art making."

Scholl uses the symmetry of 12 differently in "Untitled (Tang)." A six-foot by six-foot platform was built where stacks of the orange powdered drink are placed on a dark blue background and organized in a circle around a bottle of Tang.

"When I was a kid, I drank more Tang than anything else because that's what the astronauts did," says the artist. The drink mix, made by General Foods, was used during the Gemini space mission in the mid-1960s. As is part of his art-making, he went on the hunt for an original bottle even after discovering that the drink is still made. In order for the piece to be authentic, it had to incorporate the original bottle and design from the 1960s.

"His three-dimensional works are very exciting," says Sypher.

Jodi Sypher, curator at Hollywood Art and Culture Center, with Dennis Scholl discussing "A Day of Four Sunsets" running through Sunday, Jan. 4. *(Photo by Marco Bellochio)*

The exhibition includes hanging sculptures fashioned from space gloves alongside works incorporating View-Masters—cultural relics that invite viewers to peer into miniature images of the universe.

He was also able to acquire Russian space food – "actual Russian rations used in space" and a "decent size of Kapton," a foil used on spacecraft for radiation shielding. "These are the original pieces of foil that were actually on the capsule of Apollo 15 as it came back to Earth and kept it from burning up." The small, sculptural work using the foil is arranged within a dodecagonal framework.

"Years of collecting and evaluating objects have made Scholl's eye incredibly discerning," said Larry Ossei-Mensah, who curated last March's Piero Atchugarry Gallery in Miami.

But not everything in the show is bright and shiny. He includes "Untitled (Tragedy)," New York Daily News' front pages of the 1986 Challenger disaster, which also appeared in his Miami show.

Six identical Daily News newspapers, displaying the contrails of the exploded Challenge spacecraft, where seven astronauts were lost. This was included in Dennis Scholl's first U.S. solo exhibition, too, in Miami. *(Photo courtesy of Dennis Scholl)*

"It was another thing I wanted to consider – that globally and as a country, we want to chase and master this technology but, on the way, there are real costs and there are real difficulties," says Scholl. "I wanted to show the difference between man's technology, the technological achievement, and the price you pay for obtaining that achievement."

Sypher adds that Scholl's work fits seamlessly within the educational mission of the Hollywood Art and Culture Center. "We're excited about both the science and space exploration aspects, as well as the mathematical component of the dodecagon framing. But more than that, his work is just a great fit for the center overall."

Hanging View-Masters, cultural relics, invite viewers to peer into miniature images of the universe. *(Photo by Marco Bellochio)*

The exhibition coincides with the Hollywood Arts Hub, which officially opened on Nov. 2, a recent expansion of the Hollywood Art and Culture Center, which will provide more space for the center's arts and community activities. Construction of the Arts Hub was funded by the City of Hollywood through funding from a 2019 General Obligation Bond that was approved by city voters in a special election.

In addition to Scholl's exhibition, two other artists have works on display, including Miami Beach–based Felice Grodin's "Where Do I Go From Here?," which features intricate ink drawings on translucent Mylar that blend architectural structure and surreal imagination. Miami-based artist Brian Reedy is presenting "Gothic Pop Prints," custom linoleum block prints with a Lizzie Borden theme inspired by Thinking Cap Theatre's "Lizzie the Musical," which was presented at the center.

If you go:

WHAT: Dennis Scholl: "A Day of Four Sunsets."

WHERE: Hollywood Art and Culture Center, 1650 Harrison St., Hollywood

WHEN: Through Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026. Gallery hours: Tuesday by appointment, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wednesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Thursday; noon to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

COST: $10 general admission, $5 seniors ages 65 or older, students with valid school ID, and children ages 13 to 17; free admission for members, children 12 and younger, teachers and active military personnel with valid ID.

INFORMATION: 954-921-3274 and www.artandculturecenter.org

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